

Eastside Rail Corridor Outreach Summary (10/20/2010)

The following is a summary of public comments on the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) from June to September of 2010. In total nearly 500 questionnaires were collected, over 900 visits were made to the City's ERC web site, and more than 300 visitors received information about ERC at the Wednesday and Friday Markets. The comments are categorized using the Transportation Conversations policies created by the Transportation Commission in June of 2010.

Move people

The Principle: Support a transportation system, and related government and private actions, that promotes all forms of transportation.

Transportation Modes Considered

Trail (pedestrian, bicycle, roller blade, equestrian, nonmotorized scooter)

Rail (recreation, commuter, freight)

Both Trail and Rail

Ridership/Use

Determine ridership/use estimates for each option

Determine types of trips (recreation, commuter, etc.).

Determine origin and destinations of trips.

Determine number of trips that begin or end in Kirkland.

How will ridership change during peak hours (moving people).

For Rail, what level of service (per hour) is appropriate .

Consider the movement to telecommuting and advanced technologies making travel less important in the future.

Design visual image of corridor (how should it look).

Create rail design and operations options (space, type, crossings).

Trail

Plan for fast bicycles and separation from walkers.

Trail provides healthy living.

Trail without rail would allow equestrian use.

Trail contributes to Kirkland's image as a great place to walk and healthy living.

Trail enables wildlife to continue to inhabit the space.

Start with non-rail - less expensive option (bus) on corridor to establish use and feasibility.

Start with non-rail - less expensive option to demonstrate impact on congestion.

Trail would be just plain good old fun!

Trail would create a safe route to schools along the corridor.

Trail could increase opportunities for neighborhood shopping.

Trail builds strong communities.

Trail would provide safe place for people to exercise and commute by bicycle/walk.

Move people (continued)

Rail

Do we need higher density to justify light rail?

Not sure people will use rail.

Ridership improves for rail if it is comfortable and easy to use.

Given climate in Pacific Northwest there must be shuttles and connections to link rail with urban centers (or people will not use the system) - rain!

Freight could be moved through that corridor and probably help several businesses, it could be done at night.

Rail is THE future for mass transit. Rail is the way many successful major metro areas move their residents.

There are already enough trails and parks in our community. Rail is something new and will take us into the future.

Consider efficiencies and cost of rail alternatives (like bus rapid transit on I-405).

Transportation issues are the biggest problem facing the Lake Washington communities in the near future. A well-developed network of light rail services surrounding the lake would be one of the most obvious ways to alleviate traffic.

The waterfront already offers good safe walking areas. In the Juanita Area, we can go to the walking trails that go from Woodinville to Redmond which offers an extended parkway.

I-405 cannot be expanded further without extremely high costs due to development along the corridor and the need to re-build existing bridges and interchanges. Use of I-405 for light rail will reduce the existing lanes. By retaining the right of way for transit along the Eastside Rail Corridor, we have options.

Running freight along it would only benefit a few companies, and doesn't seem like a good use of money.

Where the real problems reside are in the geometry of the track and the cross section profile of the track. There are 97 curves along the corridor. As a comparison, the Escondido Sprinter in California has 1 curve in it. The geometry of the track has so many curves that the average speed of a commuter train in the BNSF corridor would be 24mph. Can even this be done safely since the BNSF corridor travels near schools and several different parks?

The geography and distribution of people and workplaces in the Puget Sound area is not like Europe. The area is not conducive to rail, which has no flexibility to change as living/working patterns change.

Both Trail and Rail

Kirkland will be the nicest and most envied town in the Seattle area enhancing tourism to our town and the value of our homes and greatly enhancing business for our wonderful restaurants and small businesses without increasing automobile traffic.

Trails are a wonderful thing but transportation is a first priority.

Could be used for commuting during the week and recreation on the weekend.

Physical benefits of nonmotorized transportation are taken away with dual use.

Produce a map that highlights the areas where the corridor is too narrow to carry both rail and trail, as well as routes for possible trail detours/linkages if the corridor were shared with rail.

Lower/combined costs when done together.

Use of trail will decrease with dual use (takes away amenities and attraction for trail).

Move people (continued)

Creating Links

Trails should link to regional trails (and Kirkland's parks and neighborhood walks).

Bicycle trail should link to regional trails (and Kirkland's routes).

No matter what use, ERC should link to Seattle, East King County, Bellevue, Overlake, Airport, across SR 520, North - Everett and I405 to I5, Snohomish, Sammamish River Trail, Burke Gilman Trail, Woodinville, and Renton.

Rail and trail should be an alternative to I-405 - connecting all the same destinations.

Must have connections or people will not use either.

Don't believe existing ERC (Renton to Snohomish) will be desirable without many other connections.

Consider delays or queuing problems to existing Kirkland streets.

Bicycles and pedestrians currently have no connections to regional trail systems (Sammamish River Trail or Burke Gilman) without going on the street.

The corridor does not directly serve Downtown Bellevue, the Eastside's largest activity center (and a designated regional growth center.) In addition, most of the Snohomish County portion of the corridor is outside the region's designated urban growth area."

While waiting for this issue to be resolved, the RR bridge at Kirkland Way ,9th and NE Fir Streets should be removed as soon as possible.

It is not possible for a wheelchair or stroller to go all the way from downtown to Rose Hill on a sidewalk. In the plan for the trail some type of entrance for bicycles and pedestrians onto the trail from Kirkland Way could be designed that would make it easier for people to get around and to connect to the overpass bridge

No benefit unless major connections are made (then people will ride rail).

Trail would connect neighborhoods to downtown Kirkland and Totem Lake for retail.

Traffic Impacts

Consider signal preemption.

Consider delays caused by rail crossing at grade.

Consider safety of pedestrians at all crossings .

Be sustainable

The Principle: Support a transportation system that can be sustained over the next 50 years. Act to assure that the existing and future transportation system: will be implemented, operated, and maintained over the long-term using reasonably assured revenue sources. Will be designed to move the overall environmental impact of the system toward zero.

Timing

By the year 2020 (one of three options)

Typically, the trail supporters did not support rail. However, most of the rail supporters were open to both if it could be managed. Adding together those who selected "rail" and those who selected "both" results in 48% of the respondents wanting rail by 2020.

Trail - 257 or 52% of total respondents said they wanted to see trail by the year 2020.

Rail - 119 or 24% of total respondents said they wanted to see rail by the year 2020.

Both - 119 or 24% of total respondents said they wanted to see both by the year 2020.

By the year 2030 (one of three options)

Typically, the trail supporters did not support rail. However, most of the rail supporters were open to both if it could be managed. Adding together those who selected "rail" and those who selected "both" results in 61% of the respondents wanting rail by 2030.

Trail - 187 or 39% of total respondents said they wanted to see trail by the year 2030.

Rail - 104 or 22% of total respondents said they wanted to see rail by the year 2030.

Both - 186 or 39% of total respondents said they wanted to see both by the year 2030.

Short Term Comments

Need fast for shorter term solution (immediate action to get trail).

Move as fast as possible (savings in today's economy).

Move as fast as possible to continue rail as an ongoing use along the corridor.

We are already 20 years too late.

Could start small with rail and work up.

Gravel a trail now - pave it in 5 years - study rail simultaneously.

Kirkland should do something in their segment now - take initiative.

For now, whoever "owns" the rail RoW needs to do some regular maintenance (weed clearing etc); with no more regular trains, the line through Kirkland is fast becoming an eyesore and target for vandalism, dumping, etc.

Long Term Comments

Can we insure public interest/access is maintained into the future?

Who's running the rail in the future (after 20-35 years)?

Trail only would be a historically tragic lost opportunity (rail) .

GNP doesn't want to spend money to invest in new technology - they want Sound Transit to do that, it seems undemocratic for a company like GNP to be determining the future of our city.

Light rail will take 20 years to be working, but it will save the life of our community, our county and our area.

Be sustainable (continued)

Economic

Acquisition and construction

Calculate all cost/ridership figures.

Assess financial viability of all options .

What will be the City's monetary contributions initially?

Funding needs to be feasibility, reliability, sustainability (especially in today's economy).

How financially stable is GNP?

Voter approved ST2 \$50K based upon 20 years (GNP wants to change the plan to 35 years).

What will be on the 2013 levy/ballot?

Estimate cost of alternatives (bus, trolley, light rail, etc.).

Estimate private property value impacts of various alternatives.

Consider the cost of purchasing this type of right of way - it's there now - use it.

Consider the adequacy of existing infrastructure for rail (Wilburton trestle is it safe?).

Electric rails have caused underground pipe failures, as seen in San Francisco.

Too much government spending.

Consider boost in economy and tourism with each option.

Tap into Federal grants for specific purposes (rail or trail).

Don't waste money and time studying options - use the money to do something.

The PSRC Transportation 2040 plan says a Renton-Woodinville-Redmond trail would cost \$14 million. Commuter rail Tukwila-Snohomish would cost \$1.36 BILLION, which PSRC placed in its 'Unprogrammed' category, meaning there's no planned means of funding. With the US economy facing an uncertain future, and our local infrastructure requiring huge outlays just to replace failing roadways, Explain how we can afford rail. Do we have the population density to justify it.

BNSF Eastside Corridor Commuter Rail Feasibility study dated November 17, 2008 had many concerns as well for this corridor. The report states that the track is in very poor condition. The track would need to be replaced in order to run commuter rail on it reliably and safely.

Rail is a private pursuit of profit.

As the Mercer Island I-90 project (1980's) and the east Lake Sammamish trail project was in court for years, is this what we have to look forward to for this corridor?

New construction that may require condemnation.

Takes funding away from other projects in the region and locally.

Ongoing

Cost

What will be the City's monetary contributions in maintenance and operations

How financially stable is GNP?

Who maintains and what will maintenance costs be?

What will security cost?

Consider cost of enforcement, police, fire, graffiti abatement and maintenance with each option.

Oppose the City of Kirkland spending any monies to turn the rail in to a trail or bicycle path until all other city services are reinstated and being performed at a level satisfactory to the residents and taxpayers.

Be sustainable (continued)

Economic

Benefit

Consider boost in economy and tourism with each option.

Consider tax revenue from increased development for any option.

Google, Parkplace, Totem Lake would benefit from rail (which would reduce traffic to and from each facility).

Consider increased name recognition of a City along the rail corridor .

Increases attractiveness of Kirkland bedroom community not having to drive across the lake for work.

There are enough trails that are underutilized and the economy would be better served by keeping a rail line for either commuting or freight. Unless we start charging fees to jog or bicycle.

Does the city of Kirkland receive any tax revenue from trains and the train tracks within their borders?

Environmental

Negative Impacts

Noise - keep it quiet - light rail (not freight).

Noise (no trains before 5:30am and after 6:30pm limit horn use).

Noise - no blasting of horns.

Air Quality.

Surface water (many wetlands adjacent to the corridor).

Sensitive areas.

Consider wildlife migration patterns and provide facilities for crossing.

Heavy rail could cause vibration and landslides.

Chemicals in ballasts are hazardous.

Concern about diesel pollution with rail.

Consider health impacts of those living along the tracks with rail use.

Rail could cause vibration to adjacent homes and properties.

Rail will result in dumping, alcohol, drugs, transient refuge, and is dangerous, unsightly, uncared for, and unsanitary.

Positive Impacts

Environmentally sound alternatives within rail option (alternative fuel - green alternatives).

Keep it green. Plan for environmental sustainability.

Consider problems with heavy metals in soil around rail

Reduce carbon footprint - rail will help

Consider trash along rail/trail

Be a strong voice for environment.

Consider positive health impacts of living along trail.

Rail would reduce car pollution, congestion, traffic, commute time, commuter comfort, and reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

Rail would help slow climate change.

Rail will help reduce the spread of concrete which is taking over all of our communities.

Plan for environmental sustainability.

Consider historical sites and increasing awareness through the corridor (Cannery).

Be an active partner

The Principle: Actively build and maintain partnerships locally, regionally and nationally, to further our transportation goals.

Regional Partners

What are the regional goals and planned connections.

Stay involved with the regional players.

Stay connected to neighboring jurisdictions.

Understand who administers/maintains/operates which parts of the trail/rail.

Manage interest groups - bring them together.

Weed thru regional players/interest groups and know what Kirkland thinks.

Insure permanent public access to corridor.

If trail only, is there banked rail?

Does rail banking mean freight and heavy commuter rail?

Learn from Bellevue and Bel-Red mistakes.

Always keep option open for rail (even if we don't get it now).

Development of corridor will bring Eastside communities together.

Consider rail next to freeway instead of through residential neighborhoods.

Kirkland can take the lead and open their arms to rail (the progressive solution to carry us into the future).

Take advantage of this pre-existing corridor that would be impossible to replicate today.

Paramount that partnerships with other cities, the region, the county, and transit agencies as well as large private entities (TOD developers, large employers, etc.) be well-formed for the success of any plan in the future.

Kirkland Partners

Create connections between neighborhoods.

Keep community informed about this progress.

Include input from annexation area.

Involve Houghton Community Council.

Rail will divide neighborhoods rather than connect them.

Link to land use

The Principle: Ensure consistency between land use and transportation planning and implementation.

Security and Safety

Consider safety at grade crossings.

Plan for school children use and consider safety of pedestrians .

Trains have killed pedestrian in commercial/industrial areas - this is a residential area with parks.

Strategize and resolve dual use issue/conflicts.

Resolve public safety concerns.

Consider potential for increased crime.

Create adequate separation between rail and trail.

Install fence between trail and rail (must be aesthetically pleasing fence).

Research how European Countries separate rail and trail (use their successful technologies).

Risk of law suits if accidents happen especially with dual use.

Possible terrorist attacks.

What about kids on cell phones or using head phones trying to cross tracks?

Consider trespassing impacts upon adjacent property owners.

Trail offers increased sense of community which increases safety.

Consider elevated train allowing for trail below.

Land use

Residential

Consistency with existing land use (especially residential non-compatibility with rail).

Consistency with residential character adjacent much of Kirkland's section.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan.

Proximity to schools is good and bad depending upon use and design.

Proximity to hospital is good.

Biking and walking are more compatible with residential land use (along corridor).

Be a strong voice for mitigation on adjacent properties.

Consider livability with rail (not well suited for residential) versus trail (very livable).

Already have trails, we shouldn't duplicate - go straight to rail (we don't have rail).

Property values (will they go up or down).

Rail has potential of creating a divide between the city and the neighborhoods.

Consider inconvenience during construction (of rail).

Could cause mass exodus of residences along tracks.

Would result in requests for expensive sound walls.

Rail could add to sprawl and detracts from the quality of life in existing areas.

Consider screening of residential properties - walkers on the tracks can see into homes.

Kirkland is already bisected and chopped up by I-405, NE 8th, 132nd St, 70th St, 100th Avenue, and an old railroad line. Activating the railroad by creating a rail-safe corridor that is even harder to cross does not improve the situation. Only a trail does.

The city will try to push TOD development against neighborhood wishes.

There are too many issues with using it for light rail.

Link to land use (continued)

Land Use (continued)

Commercial

Future development along corridor (how does it look).

Proximity to I405 is good.

Make transit a priority - allow for horizontal development.

Property values (will they go up or down).

Potential redevelopment incentive in Totem Lake.

Connect to downtown and neighborhood shopping centers.

Economic development opportunities.

Do we want the increased urbanization?

Rail land use needs

What about layover stops needing multiple side by side tracks?

Where will users park and how will they access the corridor?

What about "hide and ride" impacts on adjacent neighborhoods?

Stations (location, amenities, parking, platform, fare collection).

How many stations are necessary - in Kirkland?

Pinch points - what happens at narrow points.

Keep corridor together (public ownership).

Connect to existing park and rides.

124/124th with rail crossing is problem area (plus how do you bring in peds)

South of Fred Meyers 116th pinch point.

Keep active on routes so no impression that public use of rail will go away.

Consider complexity of crossing at NE 52nd Street hill/curve with minimal visibility.

Parks

Consider impacts to multiple parks along the corridor.

Rail would destroy urban greenbelt concept.

Think of this as a linear park.